



PRELIMINARY REPORT

HIGHWAY

HWY14MH006

The information in this report is preliminary and will be supplemented or corrected during the course of the investigation.

About 11:30 a.m. central standard time, on Saturday, February 15, 2014, a 2005 IC Bus 66-passenger school bus occupied by a 40-year-old driver and 34 members of the Lafayette High School baseball team was traveling eastbound on U.S. Highway 90 (US-90) near Centerville, Louisiana. Approaching from the opposite direction, a 2004 Kia Sorento (Kia) occupied by a 37-year-old driver and four passengers was traveling westbound on US-90 in the right lane at a witness-estimated speed of 70 mph. The left rear tire of the Kia experienced a tread separation and rapid air loss, and the driver lost control of the vehicle. The Kia veered into the left westbound lane, rotating in a counterclockwise direction, and departed the roadway into a 64-foot-wide depressed grassy median area. The Kia continued through the median—now rotating in a clockwise direction—crossed the left lane of eastbound traffic, and collided with the school bus, which was traveling in the right traffic lane.

The left front of the Kia contacted the right front of the school bus, resulting in the rapid rotation of the Kia and secondary impacts along the right side of the school bus. During the secondary impact events, the driver of the Kia and three passengers were ejected. The fourth passenger was wearing his lap/shoulder belt and remained restrained within the vehicle. The Kia came to a rest in the grass right-of-way separating US-90 from a frontage road on the south side of the highway. The engine, along with other components from the Kia, came to a rest on the frontage road, east of the initial impact area. The school bus continued in a southeasterly direction, departing the roadway to the right, where it crossed the grass right-of-way, the frontage road, and a drainage ditch, before coming to a rest in a sugar cane field.



Figure 1: Kia final rest position



Figure 2: School bus final rest position

As a result of the collision, the Kia driver and three rear passengers were killed. The fourth Kia passenger was seriously injured. Of the 35 school bus occupants, 30 passengers received injuries, ranging from minor to serious. The bus driver sustained minor injuries. There were no passenger seatbelts on the bus; only the driver was wearing a seatbelt.

The section of US-90 where the crash occurred had been reconstructed in 1980. The highway was comprised of two 12-foot-wide lanes in each direction with a 10-foot-wide shoulder adjacent to each right lane. A 4-foot-wide shoulder separated the left lanes from the center median. The roadway was straight with no barrier. The posted speed limit was 70 mph. At the time of the collision, the weather was clear and the road conditions were dry.